

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD  
BOARD MEETING SESSION – DIVISION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE  
NOVEMBER 15, 2022**

**ITEM 7**

**SUBJECT**

OFFICE OF OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM UPDATES.

**DISCUSSION**

This informational item is to provide the Board with a status update on the California Drinking Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Issues and Recommendations white paper presented on May 10, 2022 by the California-Nevada Section of the American Water Works Association (CA-NV AWWA) and the California Water Environment Association (CWEA), and a status update on the Drinking Water Operator Certification Program (DWOCP) and Wastewater Operator Certification Program (WWOCP).

**CALIFORNIA DRINKING WATER AND WASTEWATER OPERATOR ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE**

On May 10, 2022, the CA-NV AWWA and CWEA presented a white paper which outlines water sector concerns and issues related to operator certification and workforce challenges. In response to the white paper, the Office of Operator Certification staff and management initiated frequent meetings with CA-NV AWWA and CWEA to discuss an action plan to address the issues and concerns. As a result, sub workgroups have been formed to focus on four specific areas and bring forth proposed recommendations to the DWOCP and WWOCP Advisory Committees:

1. Assembly Bill 1588 –Evaluating military work experience and education; and identifying opportunities for issuing water treatment, water distribution, and wastewater treatment credit for comparable military duties.
2. Guidelines of Reporting Drinking Water Operator Experience – Establishing guidelines and procedures for operator experience reporting in regards to applying for certification.
3. One-Water Regime – Defining “one-water” concept and identifying policy changes needed.
4. Wastewater Operator-in-Training (OIT) Requirements/Experience –Evaluating and developing legislative proposal for amending or eliminating the OIT requirement for wastewater treatment operators.

Each sub workgroup consists of DWOCP and WWOCP advisory committee members, representatives from CA-NV AWWA and CWEA, Office of Operator Certification staff, Division of Drinking Water staff, Division of Water Quality staff, and subject matter experts in the water sector.

The sub workgroups have all held initial kick-off meetings, selected chairs and vice-chairs, and set a schedule for regular meetings. Recommendations from the sub workgroups will be brought forth to the respective advisory committees for discussion. It is anticipated that recommendations will be developed before June 30, 2023.

### **OFFICE OF OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM UPDATES**

Effective September 1, 2022, the Office of Operator Certification staff concluded teleworking and returned to the office fulltime (5 days a week) to ensure critical operational needs are met and evaluate the work processes to identify inefficiencies with the goal of streamlining procedures for reducing application processing times.

The Office of Operator Certification initiated project scoping, in cooperation with the Division of Information Technology, in January 2022 to move from a paper-based application process to an electronic submittal portal. This project is expected to take a phased approach, initially targeting drinking water and wastewater operator Grades I and 2 examination applications. Subsequent phases will integrate higher grades and more complex certification and renewal applications as the portal is developed. Project scoping is near completion, it is anticipated that Phase I will be operational in calendar year 2023.

The computer-based testing (CBT) state service contract with Prometric was renewed on July 1, 2022. The CBT allows for increased program efficiency and provides increased testing frequency for applicants, and allows them the opportunity to self-schedule, reschedule, and choose from more than 35 locations in the State of California, as well as any Prometric testing site locations throughout the United States. This three-year state service contract will expire June 30, 2025. The Office of Operator Certification will begin preparations to initiate a new contract through the competitive bid process.

### **POLICY ISSUE**

N/A – Information item only.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

N/A – Information item only.

### **REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT**

N/A – Information item only.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

N/A – Information item only.